



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Briefing

Panelist Biographies

Enforced Disappearance in Bangladesh

Panel I



Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch, oversees the organization's work in the region. Before taking over as South Asia director in 2010, she served as Human Rights Watch's South Asia researcher since 2004. Ganguly has worked on a broad range of issues including police reform, sexual violence, discrimination based on religion or caste, freedom of expression, and armed conflict. In India, she has researched abuses surrounding the sectarian riots in Gujarat, the lack of justice in Punjab, issues of religious freedom, the failure to protect India's vulnerable communities – including those affected by the Maoist conflict – and abuses related to the fighting in the states of Manipur and Jammu & Kashmir. She has also advocated for the protection of women and children from violence, including sexual abuse, and for a human rights approach to India's foreign policy. Prior to joining Human Rights Watch, Ganguly served as the South Asia correspondent for *Time* Magazine, covering Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Ganguly has a Masters in Sociology from the Delhi School of Economics.



Shahidul Alam, a *Time* Magazine Person of the Year 2018, photographer, writer and curator, obtained a PhD in chemistry before switching to photography. Alam's work has been exhibited in the most prestigious galleries worldwide. He has chaired the international jury of World Press Photo. John Morris described his book *My Journey as a Witness* as “the most important book ever written by a photographer”. Alam founded the Drik Photo Agency, the Pathshala Media Institute and the Chobi Mela festival of photography and introduced email to Bangladesh. He was arrested and tortured in 2018 for criticising his government and spent 107 days in jail but was released on bail following a massive global campaign.



Mohammad Ashraffuzzaman ('Zaman Ashraf') is a Bangladeshi Human Rights defender exiled in Hong Kong since the personal security situation for human rights defenders deteriorated due to a well-documented crackdown on dissidents and human rights defenders in Bangladesh. Zaman is a human rights activist and is considered an expert on human rights abuses in Bangladesh. He has been active in advocating for the rights of survivors of torture, victims of extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances, seeking stronger legal protection and compliance with international law. Zaman has authored many reports and publications on Bangladesh and the South Asian region focusing on the issues of justice institutional dysfunctional feature, the significance of democratized states having competent rule of law systems, with and without his name on the publications. Zaman has worked extensively with the United Nations Human Rights mechanism with his capacity of the Main Representative of the Asian Legal Resource Centre - an NGO having General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. He has made numerous speeches in the UN Human Rights Council since 2015 on Bangladesh and countries of Asia.



Angelita Baeyens, VP of International Advocacy & Litigation at Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, is the lead attorney in many human rights cases before the UN and regional human rights mechanisms, including on freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, and violence against women. Before joining RFKHR, she served as a political affairs officer at the Americas Division of the UN Department of Political Affairs; and worked as a human rights officer at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, where she also coordinated the Office of the Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders. Ms. Baeyens is also an adjunct professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center. A dual Belgian and Colombian citizen, she holds a Law degree from the University of Ibagué and an LL.M in international human rights law from the University of Notre Dame.

Moderator



Bruce Vaughn, Ph.D. is a Specialist in Asian Affairs with the Congressional Research Service where he works on the Indo-Pacific region. Vaughn was a 2012 Axford/Fulbright Fellow at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand. He previously taught Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asian studies-focused courses as an Associate Professor at Georgetown University. Vaughn edited or coedited *The Borderlands of Southeast Asia*, *The Unraveling of Island Asia?* and *Amongst Friends: Australian and New Zealand Voices From America*. Vaughn also worked as Senior Defence Analyst at the Embassy of Australia in Washington after completing his Ph.D. at the Australian National University. His dissertation focused on the comparative politics and security of India and South Asia. He previously worked for the Senate Democratic Policy

Committee, the Senate Treaty Review Support Office and the Senate Select Committee on Secret Military Assistance to Iran and the Nicaraguan Opposition.